

Application No.: 09/554,733

Docket No.: 22135-00005-US

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A sponge cloth having a density of at least  $109.6 \text{ kg/m}^3$  which is based on cellulose and has been provided with an internal reinforcement, which has been obtained by an amine oxide process without being exposed to conditions where a blowing agent decomposes to form gaseous products and so as to cause a foam.
2. (previously presented) The sponge cloth of claim 1, wherein the amine oxide used in the process is N-methylmorpholine N-oxide.
3. (previously presented) The sponge cloth of claim 1, wherein the internal reinforcement comprises cotton fibers, viscose fibers or a polymeric net.
4. (previously presented) The sponge cloth of claim 1, including at least one plasticizer.
5. (previously presented) The sponge cloth of claim 1, impregnated with a biocidally active agent.
6. (previously presented) A process for producing a sponge cloth which is based on cellulose and has been provided with an internal reinforcement, which comprises
  - (a) providing a mixture which includes cellulose dissolved in the N-oxide of a tertiary amine and water and also at least one pore former and fibers, but not blowing agent,
  - (b) spreading the mixture onto a transportation belt,
  - (c) passing the layer through a coagulation bath comprising a dilute aqueous amine oxide solution to dissolve out the pore former,
  - (d) washing the remaining amine oxide out,
  - (e) drying the sponge cloth web and
  - (f) end-iteming it

Application No.: 09/554,733

Docket No.: 22135-00005-US

(g) wherein said mixture is not exposed to conditions where a blowing agent decomposes to form gaseous products.

7. (previously presented) A process for producing a sponge cloth which is based on cellulose and has an internal reinforcement, which comprises

- (a) providing a mixture which includes cellulose dissolved in the N-oxide of a tertiary amine and water and also at least one pore former,
- (b) applying the mixture to both sides of a polymeric net,
- (c) passing the layer through a coagulation bath comprising a dilute aqueous amine oxide solution to dissolve out the pore former,
- (d) washing the remaining amine oxide out,
- (e) drying the sponge cloth layer and
- (f) end - iteming it
- (g) wherein said mixture is not exposed to conditions where a blowing agent decomposes to form gaseous products.

8. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the N-oxide of a tertiary amine is N-methylmorpholine N-oxide.

9. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the coagulation bath comprises a 5 to 50% by weight aqueous amine oxide solution.

10. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the fibers fraction is 5 to 50% by weight, based on the dry weight of the sponge cloth.

11. (Previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the pore former is an alkali metal, alkaline earth metal or ammonium salt of an inorganic acid.

Application No.: 09/554,733

Docket No.: 22135-00005-US

12. (previously presented) The process of claim 11, wherein the pore former is sodium sulfate or magnesium sulfate.
13. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the pore former fraction is 30 to 90% by weight, based on the total weight of the sponge cloth raw material.
14. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the cellulose fraction is 0.5 to 10.0% by weight, based on the total weight of the sponge cloth raw material.
15. (previously presented) The process of claim 6, wherein the mixture additionally includes at least one plasticizer and/or at least one biocidally active agent.
16. (previously presented) The process of claim 6 wherein the plasticizer fraction is 1 to 15% by weight, based on the dry weight of the finished sponge cloth.
17. (previously presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein the weight is 5 to 50% of an aqueous NMMO solution.
18. (previously presented) A process according to claim 13, wherein the weight is 70 to 85%.
19. (previously presented) A process according to claim 14, wherein the weight is 1.0 to 5.0%.
20. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the weight is 2 to 10%.
21. (previously presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the fibers fraction is 10 to 40% by weight, based on the dry weight of the sponge cloth.